



Milwaukee County

Supervisor Theodore Lipscomb, 1st District
Supervisor Johnny L. Thomas, 18th District

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INCREASING LOCAL IMPACT OF PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS

Workgroup to recommend ways to increase County resident participation in construction projects

Milwaukee, WI – Milwaukee County Supervisors Theodore Lipscomb and Johnny L. Thomas are working to ensure that more dollars spent on public works projects stay in Milwaukee County. Both Supervisors sponsored a resolution approved by the County Board this morning in light of estimates that nearly two-thirds of every \$1 that Milwaukee County currently pays for construction labor is sent outside of Milwaukee County.

“We are faced with high unemployment in the County, and many of our talented and well trained constituents in the construction trades are looking for work while we continue to import labor,” Supervisor Lipscomb said.

In 1996, the County Board adopted a resolution supporting a goal of 50 percent residency on County public works construction projects, but monitoring of the residency goal was suspended in 1998. The resolution approved this morning establishes a workgroup to recommend ways to increase local resident participation in public works projects. There are many ideas and models that will be considered.

“This workgroup will be responsible for bringing forward the best ideas and best practices,” Supervisor Thomas said. “The only agenda we have is retaining a greater share of the economic benefit generated from public works projects within Milwaukee County.”

County Executive Scott Walker estimates that his program to accelerate borrowing for public works projects, due to the many advantages of federal stimulus bonding programs, will yield an estimated 1,000 new jobs. “But the fact remains that, unless we change our practices, 650 or more of these jobs will likely go to individuals who do not live in Milwaukee County,” Supervisor Lipscomb added. “We cannot send the lion’s share of this benefit to individuals in other counties.”

“Failure to achieve higher resident participation on public works projects means that Milwaukee County continues to export jobs and wages outside of the County,” Supervisor Thomas concluded. “We cannot afford the status quo.”

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